



Southeastern Idaho News

BANNOCK, BEAR LAKE, BINGHAM, CARIBOU, FRANKLIN, ONEIDA & POWER COUNTIES

ECONOMIC TRENDS

In December, the Pocatello Metropolitan Statistical Area's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate fell two-tenths of a percentage point to 3.2 percent. The area showed an increase of more than 1,000 jobs over the year. Increases occurred mostly in the service-providing sector with major growth in professional and business services, and leisure and hospitality industries.

Snowfall throughout December slowed construction slightly. While some fall outdoor recreation activity stopped, the snowfall added jobs to the economy at local ski areas and in outdoor winter recreation programs. The busy holiday season added jobs at local retail stores and restaurants and brought visitors to the area filling hotels as shown by the 150 job increase in temporary staffing agencies.

Special Topic: Leadership Change in Southeastern Idaho

A major leadership change occurred in Southeastern Idaho with the retirement of Dr. Richard Bowen, Idaho State University's president whose career leading the university spanned more than 20 years.

Southeastern Idaho welcomed a new leader in Dr. Arthur Vailas. State Board of Education member and chair of the university presidential search committee,

Southeastern Idaho Table 2: December 2005 Unemployment Rates for Southeastern Idaho Counties

County	Dec '05	Nov '05	Dec '04
Bannock	3.1%	3.4%	4.2%
Bear Lake	3.4%	3.0%	3.9%
Bingham	3.4%	3.6%	4.3%
Caribou	5.2%	4.2%	5.8%
Franklin	3.0%	3.0%	4.8%
Oneida	2.0%	2.8%	3.2%
Power	4.5%	4.2%	7.2%

Southeastern Idaho Table 1: Pocatello MSA Labor Force & Employment Bannock and Power counties

	Dec 2005*	Nov 2005	Dec 2004	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
Seasonally Adjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	45,580	45,120	44,180	1.0	3.2
Unemployment	1,480	1,550	1,960	-4.5	-24.5
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.2	3.4	4.4		
Total Employment	44,100	43,570	42,220	1.2	4.5
Unadjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	45,390	45,420	44,080	-0.1	3.0
Unemployment	1,480	1,500	1,970	-1.3	-24.9
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.3	3.3	4.5		
Total Employment	43,910	43,920	42,110	0.0	4.3
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs** - NAICS	39,940	39,960	38,820	-0.1	2.9
Goods-Producing Industries	5,600	5,630	5,610	-0.5	-0.2
Natural Resources & Mining	20	20	20	0.0	0.0
Construction	2,240	2,310	2,210	-3.0	1.4
Manufacturing	3,340	3,300	3,380	1.2	-1.2
Food Manufacturing	940	950	960	-1.1	-2.1
Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	150	150	170	0.0	-11.8
Machinery Manufacturing	80	80	90	0.0	-11.1
Other Manufacturing	2,170	2,120	2,160	2.4	0.5
Service-Providing Industries	34,340	34,330	33,210	0.0	3.4
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	7,670	7,640	7,490	0.4	2.4
Wholesale Trade	1,310	1,290	1,300	1.6	0.8
Retail Trade	4,960	4,940	4,700	0.4	5.5
Utilities	40	40	50	0.0	-20.0
Transportation & Warehousing	1,370	1,370	1,440	0.0	-4.9
Information	730	730	710	0.0	2.8
Financial Activities	2,120	2,120	2,080	0.0	1.9
Professional & Business Services	5,240	5,090	4,840	2.9	8.3
Educational & Health Services	3,160	3,140	3,060	0.6	3.3
Leisure & Hospitality	3,720	3,760	3,350	-1.1	11.0
Other Services	1,260	1,260	1,220	0.0	3.3
Government Education	5,640	5,990	6,010	-5.8	-6.2
Government Administration	4,800	4,600	4,450	4.3	7.9

*Preliminary Estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

Karen McGee, made the announcement at a press conference at the Stevens Performing Arts Center in Pocatello. In a very humble and emotional statement to the audience, Dr. Vailas said, "The minute I stepped on campus, I felt this is the right place." Vailas currently is vice chancellor and vice president for research and intellectual property management for the University of Houston System and the University of Houston. He will take over his new position July 1.

Bannock County

- Old Town Pocatello, known for its unique boutiques and specialty restaurants, has added two new businesses and has gone wireless.

- » Simply Sheik Boutique offers unique women's clothing, shoes, jewelry and handbags not found locally. Owner Amy Flynn has brought in fashions from makers such as Sweet Pea, Speechless and See Thru Soul. The new store is located in the 100 block of North Main in Old Town.
- » The Sheep Shop, formerly located at the Pine Ridge Mall, has moved to Old Town. The store is located in the 100 block of South Main, next to Michelle's City Lights.
- » Old Town Pocatello now offers free wireless connection. The historic business district hopes this latest technology will lure more visitors into the area. The entire Old Town area has become Internet accessible to anyone with a laptop computer or other Internet device. Old Town's Internet service area ranges from Benton Street to Wyeth Street, including Main and Arthur and everywhere in between.
- » Pocatello's Farmers Market will move to Old Town when it opens this spring. The market has taken place in the parking lot of city hall since it began. However, the market has experienced incredible growth and has had to turn vendors away because there wasn't enough space. The move to Old Town will provide adequate space for continued growth. Old Town Inc. plans to improve the area where the market will be located.
- » Talbot Wright LLC has opened in the Valentine Building in Old Town. Owner T. Robert Talbot offers investment portfolio services including traditional stocks, bonds and mutual funds.
- » Convergys Customer Support Center in Pocatello wants to expand its local work force by approximately 100 workers. In an effort to tap into an expanded work force, the center will pilot a project to employ home agents. If the project is successful in Pocatello, Convergys will expand the home agent concept into its other operations. Home agents will receive approximately three weeks of training and then work at the call center for 30 days before they will be certified to work at home. Home agents will be supplied computer equipment, a telephone headset and a phone router. Workers will be expected to provide their own high-speed Internet access. This is a fairly new concept nationwide, but it has proven to tap into a work force that would not exist otherwise, such as people who lack daily transportation, have disabilities that prevent them from working outside their homes and people who would have to commute long distances to work at the center. Convergys currently employs nearly 700 workers.

Bear Lake County

- An open house was held for Bear Lake Memorial Hospital's new residents wing. The new wing, the first phase of a two year building project, features large resident rooms and can accommodate up to 15 residents. Nearly half of the cost of the new wing was covered by local donations. The Bear Lake Valley

Health Care Foundation is currently raising funds to purchase new furniture and accessories. The second remodeling phase will begin immediately. It includes plans for a lobby, family visitation area, chapel and nurses station.

- The annual Bear Lake Hill Climb had 616 entries this year. It was the event's most successful snowmobile race ever with the largest crowd of spectators as well as the largest number of racers.

Bingham County

- Colortyme, a household furniture and appliance rental store, opened in Blackfoot. The business is located in Parkway Plaza.
- A business for scrapbook fanatics opened in Blackfoot. Lasting Memories Scrapbook is located on East Judicial.

Caribou County

- The North Gem and Grace School Districts, located in Caribou County, were each awarded a \$70,000 grant — Enhancing Education through Technology — by the State Department of Education. North Gem will use the grant to increase the impact and effectiveness of technology by closing the gap between the district's male and female students. Grace will use their grant to develop a second computer lab for Idaho Standards Achievement Test, or ISAT, remediation, for enhanced learning for gifted and talented students and for students who qualify to take courses on-line from multiple learning institutions.

Franklin County

- The Preston School District will begin construction of a \$3 million athletic complex this spring.
- Franklin City is experiencing unbelievable growth. The city recently completed construction of a water purification system at a total cost of nearly \$450,000. The city is also preparing to annex 250 acres of land for residential development. Once annexation is complete, construction will begin on the subdivision which will add up to 150 new homes in the area. The city also issued a business license to reopen a former café under new management. The café, LaVilla, opened in February.

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